

the marquee • act 4 • scene 3

APRIL 1978

The Association of Kansas Theatre received its name because that particular arrangement of the letters, A.K.T., sounded out the traditionally theatrical word, act. An act is not only a portion of a play but also a verb indicating the play's basic makeup. We are actors in our AKT as well as in our dramas, and we must take action to improve the state of theatre in Kansas.

At the State Theatre Conference this past month, I stepped down after two years as president of AKT. In the last regular session of the conference on Sunday morning, members and friends gathered to formulate goals and give them an order of importance so that our association could focus its energies on those projects deemed most important by the members. The resulting list of goals is the following:

1. A permanent office and a paid Executive Director for the Association of Kansas Theatre.
2. A central information center in the state, where theatre people can find out who has what they need for a show.
3. An effort to make dramatic arts a regular part of the curriculum of Kansas elementary schools.
4. A series of more localized workshops on the district level to aid people interested in theatre.
5. A task force to be developed to state the case and need for drama in the public schools.

As I retire from the presidency of AKT, I feel the need to speak to you about these goals and the reason for their importance to us all.

We should realize that the first and second priorities are one in the same, as are the third and fifth. All of us have come to realize the necessity for both an Executive Director and a central office which can provide an information and resource service for the entire State. So you are doing Camelot? Where can you get those expensive costumes? You call the resource center and learn that four theatres in the State have done the show and are willing to rent or even loan their costumes. The value of a resource center, then, becomes obvious. But what about an Executive Director? What will that person do besides answering such simple questions?

The need for a full-time, paid person to promote theatre in Kansas is extreme. We on the Executive Board do our best, but we hold full-time jobs in theatre and education elsewhere. Who can afford the time necessary to visit that town which needs help organizing its community theatre? Who can give the time to visit every school superintendent in the State concerning the need for drama in their classrooms? Just think of the potential benefits for theatre in Kansas and you will see why this has become our first priority. Even before the goal-setting session, our new president, Dr. Ron Frederickson, told me that this would become the primary goal of his administration. And it will be no easy task. AKT now operates on a budget of two or three thousand dollars each year, publishing this newsletter and producing the State Theatre Conference. With an Executive Director, we should be dealing with a salary of ten or twelve thousand dollars per year. Even with the generous aid of the Kansas Arts Commission and other financial grants, we would have to reach out to the membership and the business community for a great deal of financial support. Not being at all astute in business, the entire project fills me with awe. Nevertheless, my friends, I assure you that it will be done because it must be done. We must have the foresight to look ahead and plan for the growth of Kansas theatre in the years to come. The Executive Director will not take over the functions which the Board has been fully capable of handling; rather, this new person will be responsible for innovating dynamic programs and carrying them into our communities, programs

which will remain as a permanent and continuing part of those communities' artistic and cultural life. I still maintain that the home grown theatre production, while it may not always be comparable to a Broadway company, is infinitely more valuable to the community than any touring attraction.

The third and fifth goals developed at the planning session of the State Conference are even more basic and dear to my heart than those already mentioned because they represent the kind of long range improvement in Kansas theatre which might be accomplished by our Executive Director. Most of us deal with theatre in a very sophisticated form: we produce fully mounted dramatic productions for adult audiences, and occasionally for children. Once in a while, we provide a show performed by adults for an audience of little children, but we simply are not in the business of helping those little children to perform their own creative dramatic acts.

Somehow, we must bring the full force of our theatrical knowhow to bear on this problem. Children need drama and have a basic right to it, just as much as they have the right to be introduced to the beauty and creativity of music and art in their elementary education. We are now in an era which demands a return to the basics in education. Yet we must remember that the primary goal of our public education is to create "good citizens" for democratic responsibility in our society. To quote Brian Way, "Compassion, sympathy, understanding and tolerance are skills which need to be learned and practiced — and they are as important for man's survival and good citizenship as are reading, writing and arithmetic." The traditional academic subjects teach students facts, but through the arts they learn to use their imaginations and creativity. Students learn imaginative ways of coping with the complex realities of everyday life. Confronted with his own uniqueness and with the fear of failure in all his life, a student needs confidence and trust in his own creative ability to make decisions and choices, the confidence which the study of creative dramatics at an early age can help him attain.

Therefore, it must become a major goal of each of us to bring the art of creative drama into our local elementary school classrooms. Though, for the most part, we are not trained to bring this form of drama to the children, who better than ourselves knows the values and rewards of the dramatic experience. Our job is to promote the use of dramatics in the classroom by the regular teacher, the teaching of creative dramatics in the college curriculum of elementary teachers, and even the hiring of a creative dramatics specialist by each district to travel from school to school and serve the needs of both teachers and students. Specialists are a feature of school districts in many states such as Colorado and Texas. Our schools are strong in teaching students love and respect for sports and physical activity, but we in Kansas are well behind the times in the use of all the arts to develop and expand the quality of life for our children. Is this proposal a revolution which will cost a fortune? Perhaps the contemplated specialist would add to the overburdened payroll, but the training of regular elementary education majors in dramatics during their college years would involve no extra costs whatsoever. Drama can be used effectively to teach all kinds of subject matter already part of the classroom curriculum. From language to literature, from social studies to numbers, dramatic games can enhance the learning process and make it much more fun for the students as well. After all, what was the old spelling bee but a dramatic game to make the rote learning of words more interesting? See what I mean?

And, finally, a self-serving argument yet one that is very meaningful to all of us who participate in theatre for adult audiences: these very children are the adult audiences of the future; once they have grown up, it is often too late to convince them that they should be interested in the arts which have been ignored during their formative years. Don't let this happen, my friends. Form a committee in your local area and get to work now. No project could be more valuable to the future of theatre in Kansas.

Lloyd Anton Frerer
Past President

CONVENTION IN 1979

The Fifth Annual Kansas Theatre Conference will be held at the Holiday Inn Plaza in Wichita from March 9 to March 11, 1979. Many of you must plan well in advance for such events. For example, we would hope that high school forensic coaches will attempt to avoid scheduling tournaments on this particular weekend so that they and their students can participate in the conference.

A number of factors were considered in making the decision to return to Wichita for the second year in a row. Criteria which the Board used are:

1. An urban center from which we can draw an audience for productions.
2. An urban center which draws participants because people are interested in going there.
3. A central location which makes travel less difficult.
4. Proper hotel and theatrical facilities to house the convention.
5. Local arrangement persons willing to devote a great deal of time and effort.
6. Proper facilities for Professional Auditions.
7. Proper facilities every other year for the Festival of American Community Theatre contest.

So far, only Topeka and Wichita meet all the criteria and we have been alternating between them. However, this would cause the Community Theatre Contest to be located in the same place each time. Thus, our decision to break the pattern so that the contest location will not be repeated in Topeka. Other cities are still possible convention locations for the future. Kansas City fails on criteria No. 3 and No. 5 at present, but might work well if we had local arrangements personnel. Salina is at least weak on criteria No. 2, No. 4 and No. 6, but remains strongly supported by some Board members. For example, air traffic access for out-of-State guests and professional theatre auditions personnel is an obvious point in favor of Wichita. In Topeka, we had to bring guests by car from the airport in Kansas City.

NEW OFFICERS

At the March Theatre Conference, three new members were elected to the Board of AKT and Dr. Ronald Q. Frederickson of Emporia ascended to the presidency. This means that the membership must choose a new President-Elect. Both the names of the new Association officers and a discussion of the candidates for election follow.

The new President of the Kansas Community Theatre Conference is Merna Pritchard, 925 North Ash, McPherson, Kansas 67460. Nominated for chairperson of the University and College Division is Piet R. Knetsch, Professor of Speech and Drama at Bethany College, Lindsborg, Kansas 67456. The new chairperson of the Professional Theatre Division is Veda Rogers, 501 East 11th, Winfield, Kansas 67156. Mrs. Rogers will be in residence at her Vassar Playhouse in Vassar, Kansas 66543, after May 20, 1978. We welcome these new members to the Board, and lose their predecessors with sadness. Twink Lynch, Joyce Cavarozzi and John Holly have each contributed body and soul to Kansas Theatre, and will continue to do so in the future because they are dedicated professionals.

As a matter of fact, one of these departing chairpersons will remain on the Board as President-Elect. In accordance with the constitution, the Board nominated two persons for the election of the membership: Joyce Cavarozzi and John Holly. Joyce is Professor of Theatre at Wichita State University, directs many plays, directs the Reader's Theatre Program, and costumes the entire world of University Theatre. She is a noted actress and has done local arrangements for two of our State Theatre Conferences. John is one of the producing directors of Wichita Music Theatre as well as directing at the Wichita Children's Theatre and teaching classes. He is an expert in theatre management, having done

professional work in New York, and he has been invaluable in local arrangements for our Wichita conventions. We give you no easy choice here, for the excellence of both candidates is above question. Only paid members may vote; therefore, you are asked to put your name on your ballot contained in this issue of the *Marquee*. Ballots will be checked and counted by Lloyd Anton Frerer and Michael Pearl at Fort Hays State University, and the privacy of all votes will be assured. If, by any chance, you have neglected to pay your 1978 dues, send your five bucks along with your ballot.

COLLEGE DIRECTORY

Joyce Cavarozzi has done it again. As far as we know, Kansas is the first state to publish a directory of University and College Theatre people, along with a list of their specializations. A sample listing is as follows:

Frerer, Lloyd Anton — B.A., U.C.L.A.; M.A., Cal. State U.; Ph.D., Univ. of Iowa
Fort Hays State University, Hays, KS 67601
1-913-628-5365

Then, in a second section, I would be listed under my areas of specialization, such as Acting, Directing, Theatre History, Film, Creative Dramatics and the like. However, I would have to limit the specialized areas to one or two choices, not an easy task for a teacher in a small, non-specialized Theatre Department. I use myself as an example because, upon reading the directory, I find myself omitted. Dear Joyce . . . Please . . .

CONTROVERSY

There exists a controversy at the highest levels of the American Theatre Association of which our readers might not be aware. The Association developed and passed at the last national convention a document entitled "Proposed Minimum Standards for the Accreditation of Theatre Degree Programs" in colleges and universities. Nothing in this document is mandatory, yet it might someday become a set of enforced standards. The document requires three full time theatre faculty members for any institution offering a B.A. in Theatre Arts, eight full time Theatre faculty members for a B.F.A. program (two in design, three in acting, in addition to the three persons necessary for the B.A. program). The document also sets standards for these programs as well as for M.A., M.F.A. and Ph.D. degrees. However, the point of contention seems to be the faculty requirements for basic degrees and the manner in which the document was passed without a chance for general examination by the membership.

The Wisconsin Theatre Association has objected officially, and the President, Al Katz, sent us a letter, part of which I shall quote:

"The document we have been presented with is a dangerous one in its stringency. Its most destructive provision is Section D of the B.A. standards: "Faculty." The document requires the presence of 3.0 F.T.E. THEATRE TRAINED faculty. This means for example that you cannot count a theatre dance course taught by a dance instructor in the Physical Education department. You cannot count Art Department faculty who teach your technicians drawing, palette control, Mechanical Drawing, etc. You cannot count English faculty who teach Dramatic Literature and Criticism. You cannot count Music faculty who teach Voice to your actors, even if these courses are required in your curriculum (or merely permitted), even if they count directly towards your degree program. If the persons do not have THEATRE TRAINING, they are non-persons . . . their courses are non-courses . . . as far as this document is concerned. According to this document you must have 3.0 full-time equivalent faculty in your B.A. program in theatre OR YOU CAN "FACE THE TASK OF PROGRAM ELIMINATION."

We in Kansas must be aware of the issues raised by this document. For example, there are forty small religious colleges in Kansas, only one of which has a theatre faculty of three, as far as I know. Such rather large institutions as Fort Hays State University and Pittsburg State University will just meet these standards by the skins of their respective Thornton Wilders. From personal experience, I must agree that three faculty constitute a minimum number for the creation of coursework leading to a well-rounded B.A. degree in Theatre. On the other hand, Kansas theatre would be infinitely poorer if the implementation of such standards should lead to the closing of all theatre programs in our smaller colleges and universities. Wisconsin argues that small colleges fill the gap with faculty in other disciplines such as English Literature, Art and Music. AKT will probably have a vote in this matter; should we support the Wisconsin position?

FINANCIAL REPORT

As part of my once and only financial report for the AKT, I have several items I need to clarify and a conclusion that is inescapable.

During the convention there came to light some misinformation. The correct information is as follows:

1. If a person is a member of a Community theatre, or any other organization, which holds an organizational membership to the AKT, that person does not automatically hold an individual membership. He must purchase an individual membership.
2. All students pay a \$3 fee for an individual membership.
3. All regular memberships are \$5.
4. Organizational memberships are \$15.
5. Dues are paid annually.
6. Organizational memberships allow for one free registration (For the president or a designated representative) at the annual convention.

Since taking over the books January, 1978 there are 93 student memberships, 48 regular memberships and 10 organization memberships. Check your records to see whether you or your organization is a current member of AKT. The inescapable conclusion is that if the AKT is to pay an executive secretary, dues will have to be paid. Those 151 memberships compare with 250 participants at the state convention, all of whom should be paid up members.

An executive secretary is definitely needed for the sheer administration and continuity of the AKT. Because AKT business is taken on as an "extra duty" by already busy faculty, students, and professional people, the records of the convention are incomplete. This is not the fault of any one person because several people in various parts of the state at different times undertook to print up forms and tickets for the convention without regard for recordkeeping. I have, therefore, made recommendations for next year's forms and procedures to the incoming president.

At this time I can only give an incomplete financial report, the full report to be presented May 6 at the executive board meeting. All the bills for the convention are not yet in. In registration \$1625 was taken in. This does not include meal tickets nor tickets for the Performances at Wilner Auditorium. There were 106 student and 73 regular registrations. 56 people participated in the professional auditions. My estimate at the present time is that the convention will be approximately \$300 in the black.

Nadine Charlsen and "Company" at Campus High School are updating the membership roles and mailing list, but don't expect much change until next fall. Despite the administrative difficulties of a new organization, I have enjoyed my brief tenure with the AKT because of all the good theatre people in Kansas. Working with you has been a real highlight for me.

Michael Pearl

CHILDREN'S THEATRE

This year at our convention in Wichita we were privileged to have with us Geraldine B. Siks, Professor Emeritus of the School of Drama, University of Washington, Seattle, Washington. Her workshop on drama with children was excellent and everyone present benefited from the opportunity to learn from this gifted and energetic leader in the field of Children's Theatre and Drama. In her inspiring keynote speech Dr. Siks asked us to consider three questions, how do we feel about the Theatre, how do we feel about children, and how do we feel about Kansas? Thinking on these questions, it seems to me that we in AKT have a special obligation to children, the future artists and audiences of the world, because we represent an art form which is a synthesis of all the Arts. The Theatre is the meeting place of the Arts, the point at which all the Arts unite and become one. As theatre artists it is our duty to see that all of the Arts are included in the basic education of children. If any of the Arts are neglected in the education of children, and by this neglect cease to be vital in their lives, then our art of theatre is diminished by this loss.

We must set ourselves the goal of working with other artists and with education to provide arts education for all the children of Kansas. Any organization which is not serving the needs of children is contributing to its own decline, for our future depends on what we do for children in the present.

"The child is the sphinx of the world; the constant riddle and mystery before whom all plans of philosophy, codes of ethics, and systems of theology must somehow prove their value." (Henry Dwight Chapin, M.D., "The Rights of Childhood," Good Housekeeping, December 1919.) Only by demanding comprehensive arts education for our children, an education which includes all art forms, can we prove the value of theatre.

Charlotte Dodson, Chairman
Children's Theatre Division

SECONDARY SCHOOLS

The secondary division of AKT was represented this year by five high schools and two junior high school instructors. Regional directors were selected for regions represented and names suggested for representatives in the other areas. These people will be contacted in the near future.

Appointed were: Gary Thompson—Liberal, Region 4; Tom Peintner—Leoti, Region 1. Regional representatives are needed for the Topeka area—Region 2, the Kansas City area, Region 3 and the Pittsburg area Region 6. If you know anyone that might be interested in any of these areas please contact me soon.

The one-act play contest held in conjunction with The Wichita Forensic Tournament was highly successful. Lois Griffing and her "Redskin Rhetoric" did a fine job of hosting the tournament and play festival. The winning schools were: third place, Nickerson High School, **WHERE HAVE ALL THE LIGHTNING BUGS GONE**—director Marjorie Unruh; second place, Wichita Heights High School, **THE MADWOMAN OF CHAILLOT**—director Mary Jabara; first place, Derby High School, **INTERVIEW**—Ken Carter, director.

Plans are being made for regional conferences in the fall for the secondary level in conjunction with the Thespians. Keep in touch and plan to get involved.

BALLOT FOR PRESIDENT-ELECT

Your name: _____
Circle One for President-Elect of AKT

Joyce Cavarozzi
John Holly

SUGGESTIONS FOR NEXT YEAR

Would you circle the areas in which you would most like to have workshops at the 1979 Conference.

Makeup	Voice for Actors	Fund Raising
Costumes	Movement for Actors	Creative Dramatics
Lighting	Script Analysis for Directors	Theatre in Education
Scenery Design	Musical Comedy	Playwriting
Auditioning	Audience Development	Reader's Theatre
Acting	Theatre Management	Blocking the Play
Other suggestions		

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City, State, Zip _____

1978 Dues
Regular \$5: Number _____
Student \$3: Number _____
Organization \$15: Number _____
Make checks payable to A.K.T.

Are you currently receiving the Marquee?
yes _____ no _____

Are you becoming a member of AKT for the
first time? yes _____ no _____

With which AKT Division should you like to
be affiliated?

- Community theatre _____
- Children's Theatre _____
- Professional Theatre _____
- Secondary School Theatre _____
- Community College Theatre _____
- University and College Theatre _____

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